

291436Z Aug 01

CONFIDENTIAL PTQ3803

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ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	AGRE-00	AID-00	CIAE-00	CTME-00	DODE-00	SRPP-00
	EB-00	EUR-00	EXIM-01	E-00	VC-00	FRB-00	H-01
	TEDE-00	INR-00	ITC-01	L-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	OMB-01
	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00
	SSO-00	SS-00	STR-00	T-00	USIE-00	PMB-00	DRL-02
	G-00	SAS-00	/008W				

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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9586  
INFO NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY  
USDOC WASHDC  
DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC

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SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/S, AF/EPS  
TREASURY FOR ED BARBER, C WILKINSON  
USDOC FOR 4510 ERIC HENDERSON  
STATE PASS USTR/RWHITTAKER  
NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR JFRAZER  
LONDON FOR CGURNEY  
PARIS FOR BISA WILLIAMS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/28/06

TAGS: [EAGR](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#)

SUBJECT: ZIMBABWE'S COMMERCIAL FARMERS BEING BACKED TO THE WALL

CLASSIFIED BY ECON/COMM OFFICER MARK PROKOP, REASON 1.5 (B),  
(D)

¶1. (C) ON AUGUST 28 THREE COMMERCIAL FARMERS REPRESENTING THE COMMERCIAL FARMERS UNION (CFU) PAID A CALL ON THE DCM AND ECONOFF TO DESCRIBE THE SERIOUSNESS OF THEIR COLLECTIVE PLIGHT AND TO ADVISE US THAT IN THEIR VIEW TIME WAS RUNNING OUT TO HALT MUGABE'S ACTIONS THAT ARE DESTROYING ZIMBABWE'S ECONOMIC FOUNDATION. THEY ALSO REQUESTED THE USG VIEW OF THE SITUATION, AND ADVISED US THAT THEY WERE MAKING SIMILAR CALLS AT OTHER PRINCIPAL MISSIONS INCLUDING THE UK, GERMANY, THE EU, THE BELGIANS AND SOME OF THE NORDIC COUNTRIES. THE VISITORS WERE WILLIAM HUGHES, CFU VICE PRESIDENT FOR REGIONS; MACK CRAWFORD, CFU REPRESENTATIVE FOR MATABELELAND; AND DAVE DUBARE, A MATABELELAND FARMER AND CFU MEMBER. THEY BELIEVE FIRMLY THAT PRESIDENTS MBEKI, MOGAE AND CHISSANO HOLD THE KEY TO CHANGING MUGABE'S PATH, AS THEIR COUNTERPARTS DID YEARS AGO WHEN THEIR CONCERTED ACTION FORCED IAN SMITH FROM POWER.

¶2. (C) THE CORE MESSAGE THEY DELIVERED WAS A SIMPLE ONE: AFTER 18 MONTHS OF HARASSMENT AND EXTREME FINANCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PRESSURE, THE COUNTRY'S COMMERCIAL FARMERS ARE CLOSE TO THE POINT OF THROWING IN THE TOWEL, EITHER COLLECTIVELY OR INDIVIDUALLY. THE PRESSURE HAS RISEN CONSIDERABLY IN RECENT WEEKS, AS EVENTS IN CHINHOI, HWEDZA, DHOMA AND MATABELELAND INDICATE. THE FARMERS DESCRIBED A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT TACTICS BEING USED IN VARIOUS LOCATIONS BY THE GOZ TO DRIVE THEM OUT OF BUSINESS OR OFF THEIR FARMS.

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FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE WESTERN DISTRICTS AND IN THE AREA BETWEEN HARARE AND MUTARE, WIDESPREAD BURNING OF WINTER CATTLE GRAZING PASTURES HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT TO DESTROY THE VIABILITY OF BEEF OPERATIONS (THE FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE OUTBREAK HAS SHUT DOWN ALL CATTLE TRANSPORT - SO RELIEF BY HERD RELOCATION IS RULED OUT). AT THE SAME TIME FIRES HAVE BEEN SET IN ADJOINING COMMUNAL AREAS TO DRIVE PEASANTS ONTO THE RANCHERS' PROPERTIES, WHERE THEY CONSIDER THE STOCK TO BE THERE FOR THE TAKING. ANOTHER TACTIC WAS MAKING SURE THAT AN INVADER'S SETTLEMENT IS ON EACH AND EVERY COMMERCIAL FARM, AND THAT AT LEAST ONE AUTOMATIC WEAPON IS AT EACH SETTLEMENT TO BE SHOWN TO FARM WORKERS TO REMIND THEM OF THEIR FATE SHOULD THEY INTERFERE WITH THE INVADERS OR VOTE WRONGLY IN ANY UPCOMING ELECTIONS. THE FARMERS POINTED OUT THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S ARRAY OF EVOLVING TACTICS WAS CLEARLY DESIGNED AND EXECUTED TO SKATE BELOW THE RADAR SCREEN OF INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION BROUGHT ON BY VIOLENCE, AND ALL AGREED THAT THE GOZ HAD BEEN FAIRLY SUCCESSFUL OF LATE IN THIS REGARD.

¶3. (C) THE FARMERS TOLD US THAT OUT OF FEAR, EXASPERATION AND SIMPLE FATIGUE, A COMMUNITY OF FARMERS IN THE VIRGINIA AREA (ABOUT 100 K EAST OF HARARE AND AN AREA THAT SAW MUCH VIOLENCE, INTIMIDATION AND A NUMBER OF MURDERS IN THE RUNUP

TO PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS LAST YEAR) HAD CUT AN INDEPENDENT DEAL WITH THE INVADERS, GIVING UP 30 TO 40 PERCENT OF THEIR LAND JUST TO BE LEFT ALONE AND IN PEACE. THIS WAS THE FIRST WE HAD HEARD OF SUCH A DEVELOPMENT, AND THE FARMERS REPRESENTING THE UNION CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD THAT SUCH ACTIONS UNDERMINED NATIONAL COLLECTIVE EFFORTS AND PLAYED INTO THE WISHES OF THE RULING PARTY. AS ONE OF THEM QUIPPED ON THEIR WAY OUT, "UNITED WE NEGOTIATE, DIVIDED WE BEG."

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14. (C) THE FARMERS ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE RAPIDLY DETERIORATING AND HYPERINFLATIONARY ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT, SPURRED BY THE RAPIDLY DECLINING ZIMDOLLAR, MAY ALSO PUT ANY OF THOSE FARMERS WHO REMAIN OUT OF BUSINESS. "WELL OVER HALF OF OUR INPUTS ARE IMPORTED, AND WE JUST CANNOT PAY 700, 1000 OR 1500 ZIMDOLLARS (THE LATTER A YEAR END RATE PREDICTION) TO THE U.S. DOLLAR AND STAY IN BUSINESS." THEY CLOSED WITH THE POINT THAT THEY AND THEIR COLLEAGUES ARE BEING PUSHED TO THE BRINK, AND WITH A PLEA THAT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, WHEN THE POLITICAL ISSUES ARE FINALLY DECIDED, BE PREPARED TO AID AGRICULTURE'S RESUSCITATION VIA A SIZABLE HARD CURRENCY FACILITY PRICED AT REASONABLE RATES TO GET THE INDUSTRY BACK ON ITS FEET.

15. (C) COMMENT: WE DIFFER WITH NONE OF THE ANALYSIS OR CONCLUSIONS REACHED BY THE FARMERS. THEIR RECOGNITION OF THE GUILE AND TACTICS ARRAYED AGAINST THEM IS NOT FLAWED, AND THEIR COMMERCIAL-BASED ECONOMIC SUGGESTIONS ARE REASONABLE ONES. WE SKETCHED OUT USG CONCERNs AND INTERESTs, AND SOME OF THE POSSIBLE PATHs FORWARD. OUR CONTACTs WITH THIS GROUP WILL CONTINUE, AS BOTH SIDES FOUND IT WORTHWHILE, EVEN IN THE CONTEXT OF A VERY BLEAK OUTLOOK.

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